DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 600 UD 024 123

TITLE Racial and Ethnic High School Dropout Rates in New York City. A Summary Report.
INSTITUTION Aspira, Inc., New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 29p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Black Students; *Dropout Prevention; *Dropout Rate; *Dropouts; Educational Policy; *High Schools; *High School Students; Hispanic Americans; *Minority Groups; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS Aspira Inc; *New York (New York); New York City Board of Education

ABSTRACT

This summary of a 1983 report by ASPIRA of New York on the state of minority secondary education in New York focuses on the dropout problem in New York City's public high schools. The summary also includes additional background information and makes clear ASPIRA's official position on the dropout question. The summary begins by presenting an overview of the findings of the report and background on ASPIRA's past research into the educational attainment of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic youth. This is followed by extensive excerpts from the report that focus specifically on the dropout situation in the New York public high schools. The conclusion to this summary outlines additional findings that emerged after extensive discussions between ASPIRA and the School Chancellor and ASPIRA and staff of the New York City Board of Education's Office of Student Information Services. Recommendations for action unanimously approved by the Board of Directors of ASPIRA of New York on July 26, 1983, and transmitted to the Chancellor are included in the final section. (KH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED254600

Racial and Ethnic High School Dropout Rates in New York City: A Summary Report/1983

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Angela Gonzalez
ASPIRA of New York

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

UD024123

Aspira of New York Inc.
[illegible] East 149 Street, Bronx, New York 10451

RACIAL AND ETHNIC HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES IN NEW YORK CITY:

A SUMMARY REPORT

1983

ASPIRA of New York, Inc.
332 East 149 Street
Bronx, New York 10451

(212) 292-2690

Angelo Gonzalez
Executive Director

Gladys Carrion, Esq.
Chairwoman

PREFACE

On June 9, 1983, ASPIRA of New York released a wide-ranging report, which it commissioned, on the state of public secondary education in New York City. Written by consulting economist Ronald Calitri, this report, Minority Secondary Education in New York State and New York City, sparked a renewed debate on the seriousness of the dropout problem in the city's public high schools. In order to stimulate further public discussion of this critical issue, ASPIRA of New York has produced this shorter version of the original report and has included additional background information as well as the official position of the agency on this question.

This summary begins by presenting an overview of the findings of the report and background on ASPIRA of New York's past research into the educational attainment of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic youth. This is followed by extensive excerpts from the Calitri report that focus specifically on the dropout situation in the New York public high schools.

The conclusion to this summary outlines additional findings that emerged after extensive discussions between ASPIRA and staff of the New York City Board of Education's Office of Student Information Services, as well as with School Chancellor Anthony Alvarado. Recommendations for action unanimously approved by the Board of Directors of ASPIRA of New York on July 26, 1983 and transmitted to the Chancellor are included in the final section.

To some, the release in June of a report which was so critical of the Board of Education's failure to effectively deal with the dropout problem appeared inappropriate because it came at a time when a new Chancellor was still in the process of getting oriented to his job. From other quarters, it did not appear that a Puerto Rican educational agency should be creating problems for the first Puerto Rican School Chancellor in New York.

To ASPIRA of New York, one of the oldest educational institutions in the Puerto Rican community, the dimensions of the dropout problem facing our community (and as our report shows, facing all of New York City) are so alarming that they cannot be minimized or simply glossed over. Clearly, with a newly appointed Chancellor, our report was directed at the Board's past policies and practices with the hope that a new and hopefully uncompromised school administration would change those policies and practices.

As a public supporter of Chancellor Alvarado's candidacy for the post, ASPIRA of New York is clearly interested in supporting and not criticizing his efforts to improve the school system. We believe that an important starting point for doing so is by making the Puerto Rican and Hispanic community and the general public aware of the actual dimensions of this serious problem in order to help strengthen a constituency for change.

ASPIRA of New York has pointed out from the day of its release that our report represented no more than an initial exploration of a number of

educational issues facing Puerto Rican and other communities in New York City. Many of its findings, in this sense, are estimates based on the data that were available to our researcher and are not final. We have found, following discussions with the Board of Education staff, that our estimates of the dropout problem appear to provide a more accurate picture of the current realities of the public school system than official accounts. This research, however, clearly requires much more refinement and further work. It has, we believe, raised some very critical questions about future research and action in this area that cannot be ignored.

Many individuals were involved in the development of this effort. Ronald Calitri, the author of the June 1983 report, went well beyond the call of duty to marshall data and other information, as well as attending the innumerable meetings with ASPIRA, the Board and others. Angelo Gonzalez, ASPIRA's Executive Director, and his staff (Lydia Torres, Jane Bello, Anthony Carrion, and others), as well as various members of our Board of Directors (Gladys Carrion, Esq., Chairwoman; Philip Rivera, Vice Chair; and others), have taken on this issue with a zeal and dedication that is rare. Special acknowledgement for their invaluable contribution is also made to Evelyn Radinson and her husband, William, a Special Advisor to our Board, for their condensation of the Calitri report and other timely contributions.

Although some Board of Education staff have challenged the findings and methodology of the report and do not, therefore, endorse it in any way, we would like to extend our appreciation to them for making data available and for meeting with us on a number of occasions to present their criticisms and gracefully agreeing, in essence, to disagree. We would like to especially thank Tom Gross, Director of the OSIS, and his staff; Nathan Quiñones, Director of the Office of High Schools; Sherman Jackson, Public Relations Director, and, of course, Chancellor Alvarado. We have learned much from this interaction and expect it will continue, disagreements and all. We hope the readers of this report will also contribute to this important public discussion by sending us their reactions to it.

Angelo Falcón
Chairman
Education Policy Committee
Board of Directors
ASPIRA OF NEW YORK, INC.

November, 1983

CONTENTS

PREFACE i

TABLES iv

INTRODUCTION: THE DROPOUT CRISIS AND THE PUERTO RICAN-HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK CITY

— The Current Situation 1

— Background 2

"MINORITY SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY" (EXCERPTS)

— Tenth Grade Through Graduation Cohart Analysis 5

— Minority Groups in Grade Ten Through Graduation 7

— The Ninth Grade Dropout Rate 8

— Grade By Grade Dropout Rate 9

— The Overall High School Dropout Rate 10

— The Rising Dropout Rate 11

— The High School Equivalency Examination 12

— Dropout Outlook 13

— Conclusion 14

EPILOGUE AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

— ASPIRA of New York's Position 15

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 19

TABLES

I. DROPOUT RATES FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE, TENTH GRADE CHOHORTS GRADUATING IN 1981 AND 1982. . . . 6

II. DROPOUT RATES FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS IN NEW YORK STATE, TENTH GRADES OF 1987-79 AND 1979-80 THROUGH GRADUATION IN 1981 AND 1982, AVERAGE OF BOTH YEARS . . . 7

III. RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION BY GRADE OF GRADUATION COHORTS OF 1981 AND 1982, AVERAGED NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, GRADE 10 TO GRADUATION 8

IV. FRESHMAN CLASS OF 1978-79 AND SOPHOMORE CLASS OF 1979-80, NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS 9

V. SAMPLE CHOHORT ANAYLSIS OF 9th GRADE DROPOUT RATE IN TWENTY-ONE NEW YORK HIGH SCHOOLS FRESHMAN CLASS OF 1978-79 AND SOPHOMORE CLASS OF 1979-80 9

VI. DROPOUT RATES FOR INDIVIDUAL GRADES IN NEW YORK CITY AND UPSTATE NEW YORK PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, 1978-1982. . . 10

VII. FOUR YEAR HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES (GRADE NINE THROUGH GRADUATION) UPSTATE NEW YORK AND NEW YORK CITY, 1978-82 11

VIII. DROPOUT RATES FOR TENTH GRADE JANUARY - JUNE GRADUATION COHORT OF 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982 AND PROJECTIONS FOR 1983 AND 1984, NEW YORK CITY. 12

IX. AUXILARY HIGH SCHOOLS, GRAND TOTAL OF STUDENTS TAKING AND PASSING GRADUATE EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION, 1979-80, 1980, 1981, 82. 13

INTRODUCTION: THE DROPOUT CRISIS AND THE PUERTO RICAN-HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK CITY

The Current Situation

The failure of the New York City public school system to educate the overwhelming majority of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic youngsters has been such a long-standing problem that it appears its massiveness has numbed many educators and others into accepting it as a normal part of the educational system. For the thousands upon thousands of young people who have dropped out of the school system or have survived it with minimal skills, however, the effects have been devastating to their lives.

The experiences of ASPIRA of New York, Inc. in working with Hispanic and other disadvantaged young people for over 22 years have indicated that as we enter the 1980s (the much-heralded "Decade of the Hispanic"), there has been relatively little progress made in expanding educational opportunity to our community. What has changed in the last decade or so, unfortunately, has been the growing attitude of the majority population in the United States towards a greater tolerance in denying such opportunities to Puerto Ricans and other minorities.

It was in this context that ASPIRA of New York, Inc. commissioned a study of the educational outcomes for Puerto Rican and other Hispanics in the New York public school system. The result was a sobering report written by economist Ronald Calitri which estimates the current dropout rate for Hispanics at 80 percent, the highest for all major racial-ethnic groups in New York. But perhaps most frightening of all is the fact that this indicates that we not only made no progress in this regard over the last twenty years, but that the dropout rate for Hispanics has in fact worsened over the last two decades.

In 1980-81, Hispanics made up 31 percent of the total student body of the New York City public schools making it the fastest growing segement of the school population in recent years. Between 1976-77 and 1980-81 it increased 10.3 percent, compared to a black student increase of 2.6 percent and a decline of all others of 6.5 percent.

ASPIRA of New York's most recent study of the situation facing Hispanic youngsters in the New York City public schools reveals the following alarming findings:

* Hispanics displayed the highest dropout rates (80%) from the 9th to the 12th grades compared to blacks (72%) and whites (50%).

* Compared to the overall dropout rate in Upstate New York (17%), the overall dropout rate of 68 percent in New York City from grades 9 to 12 is excessively high for all groups.

-- For each group, the dropout rate in New York City was more than double that of upstate. For Hispanics it went from 29 percent upstate to 80 percent in New York City; for Blacks, from 39 to 72 percent; and for Whites, 16 to 50 percent.

* Private school enrollment does not provide an alternative since they only enroll 12 percent of all Hispanic students (compared to 40 percent of all White students).

  -- The dropout rate for Hispanics in the private schools is also relatively high for Hispanics (20 percent compared to 13 percent for Whites and 9 percent for Blacks).

* The overall unemployment rate in New York City for youth 16-21 of age who are dropouts rose over the last decade from 53 percent in 1970 to 73 percent to 1980. The high dropout rate experienced by Hispanics and other students in the New York City public schools clearly illustrates the educational system's contribution to the enormous youth unemployment problem.

* The methodology utilized by the New York City Board of Education to determine the dropout rate under-reports the actual rate. They put the dropout rate at 43-45 percent while our study found 68 percent to be a more accurate figure.

These findings point to the need to recognize that the dropout crisis of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics from the New York City public high schools should be the number one educational priority for the Hispanic community.

Background

In 1968, ASPIRA of New York issued a report by Richard J. Margolis entitled, The Losers: A Report on Puerto Ricans and the Public Schools, which found that:

> Things being what they are, it is not surprising to hear from some teachers and administrators that Puerto Rican school children have nowhere to go but up. Yet there is little support even for that faintly comforting notion. It would be more accurate to say that Puerto Rican children have nowhere to to go but out --- out of schools and into a world for which they are unprepared. This they are doing in large numbers. The public schools are like a giant sieve, sifting out all but the strongest, the smartest or the luckiest.

In 1971, ASPIRA commissioned another study '... and Others': A Report Card for the New York Public Schools by G. Ramsay Liem, which estimated the dropout rate in predominantly Puerto Rican schools to be

over 60 percent. This report concluded that, "New York City schools have not demonstrated that their programs and services begin to approach the needs of its Puerto Rican and Black students."

In 1972, ASPIRA, along with the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund and others, initiated a lawsuit against the New York City Board of Education charging that an estimated 160,000 non-English speaking Hispanic youngsters were being illegally denied full educational opportunity because of language discrimination. One result of this, ASPIRA argued, was the high dropout rate experienced by Hispanic students (60-65%). In 1974, both parties signed what has come to be known as the "ASPIRA Consent Decree" that mandated the establishment of transitional bilingual programs for students needing them. Since that time, ASPIRA has had to return to court several times because of the Board's violation of this 1974 agreement, the most recent incident being this past November 1982. The adequate implementation of effective bilingual education programs throughout the school system is, therefore, far from being a reality today.

This excessive dropout rate, the problem of language discrimination, and other factors have resulted as well in the phenomenon of the higher rate of "educational delay" by Puerto Ricans than other groups. A 1976 ASPIRA study by sociologist José Hernández Alvarez, Social Factors in Educational Attainment Among Puerto Ricans in U. S. Metropolitan Areas, 1970, found that Puerto Rican students tended to be more school years behind than their classmates from other racial-ethnic groups. This was the case in 1970 for 20 percent of those Puerto Ricans of ages 16-18 and for 53 percent of those 19 - 24. This study also reported that the 1970 Census found the Puerto Rican dropout rate in New York City to be 54 percent for those ages 19 - 24.

ASPIRA's recognition of the critical role that our youth play in the development of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic communities is what motivates us once again to get a more accurate picture of where we are in the 1980s in terms of the public schools. As one of the youngest groups in New York, Puerto Ricans (with a median age of 24 compared to that of 37 for the city as whole) see the education of our young people as absolutely critical to our community's future.

MINORITY SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY
(EXCERPTS)

by

RONALD M. CALITRI

The ability of a school system to maintain students in the normal year-to-year progression from grade to grade through senior year is known as school retention. In order to measure its progress in this regard, the New York City Board of Education has prepared two reports on dropout statistics, one issued in 1979, the other in March 1983, which reach the same conclusions. Both reports assume that about 14 percent each of grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 dropped out--an 86 percent retention rate for each grade. Assuming that this rate is constant from year to year, the final retention rate, using mathematical shorthand, would be (.86) (.86) (.86) (.86), or 55 percent; the dropout rate from grades nine to graduation is, therefore, 45 percent (100 percent total minus the 55 percent retention rate). This 45 percent dropout rate has been used repeatedly during the past few years as the basis for public discussions and policy development and, in some instances, the one year figure of 13-14 percent has been cited as the dropout rate. However, this rate requires careful scrutiny.

Despite the national practice of measuring dropouts by means of retention rates, the New York City Board of Education does not treat dropouts in this manner. Instead, because State law requires each high school to report simply a whole number of dropouts, a single number is generated combining dropouts from all grades. This single number is then applied against all students to generate a single dropout rate.

The dropout rates generated in this manner vary widely from school to school. Some schools, such as Stuyvesant and Bronx Science, report dropout rates as low as one percent. Other schools, such as Park East, Lower East Side, Pacific, and auxiliary high schools, have reported more than forty percent of their students as dropouts at least once during the last three years (1979-82). Generally, however, most official dropout rates vary between ten and twenty percent of the student body per year.

The dropout statistics are dependent on reports from over 100 different public high schools in New York City. As each school is under pressure to reduce its dropout rate, the possibility of underreporting of dropouts exists (given the complexity of the reporting system and the lack of follow-up).

The New York City Board of Education has also developed a panopoly of programs designed to improve students' chances of graduation. Although these programs, in effect, swell enrollment (bringing down the overall dropout rates), they do not, in reality, provide the same path to graduation as that of regularly graded students. In recent years these "holding power" programs have multiplied dramatically under such names as "Project Able", "Operation Return", "Project Aware", various "Prep" programs (such as "Curtis Prep" and "Project Guide"), "Second Chance", and "Project Win". These "holding power" programs represent a tremendous effort, largely on the part of individual high schools, to identify potential or past dropouts and place these "special, non-graded" students into special educational situations where basic skills and better attitudes

can be imparted. In 1976-77 there were 19,452 such students and by 1981-82 the number had risen to 35,736 (a total growth of 183 percent or about 21 percent per year). However, only about 1,500 diplomas (4 percent of the total) were granted to the special ungraded students in 1982. Therefore, although most cannot be expected to graduate, special ungraded students have been carried on the registers until recently, further obfuscating the actual dropout figures.

Moreover, the assumption that the Board of Education implicitly makes, that equal numbers of students drop out from each grade, disregards the entire dynamic process involved in school retention. No group of students is identical and successive waves of students should not be treated as if they are. Consequently, it is because of the aforementioned means by which the Board of Education collects its figures and the manner in which those figures are analyzed or interpreted that questions are raised about the dropout rate computed by the Board.

A more realistic method of accounting for secondary school retention appears to be the method used in calculating the national retention rates: treating each successive class separately. Under this approach, students in a particular grade one year are expected to appear in the next highest grade during the following year. If they do not appear, they have not been retained. Using this approach, retention rates have been calculated for students graduating in 1981 and 1982 by State and, more specifically, for each of four racial and ethnic groups for New York State as a whole, upstate New York, New York City, and for each of the five New York City counties. The results of these calculations show that the dropout rate has been underestimated by the Board of Education.

This report will also show that high school youth from <u>all</u> racial and ethnic groups in New York City generally share the burdens traditionally thought by most to be borne only by Black and Hispanic students. It has found that high school graduation, a fundamental requirement for participation in the benefits and opportunities of our society, is not being obtained by more than two-thirds of New York City's public school youth.

TENTH GRADE THROUGH GRADUATION COHORT ANALYSIS

Two significant problems required some divergence from the ideal cohort analysis procedure normally used to derive the dropout rate from grades 9 - 12, thus making it necessary to do so initially only from grades 10 - 12. A "cohort" is defined as a group of persons who share some common characteristic at a given point in time (position in a particular grade in this case), and who then can be expected to experience the forces of history together as a group (in this case to progress through the grades together).

First, as in the case of the official drop outs, there was difficulty in obtaining an accurate number of public high school graduates for New York City for the years 1981 and 1982. In those two years, 46,830 and 45,690 persons were reported to the New York State Education Department

by the Board of Education as having graduated. However, the Board of Education's internal figures show that 40,723 persons graduated in 1982, 4,967 less than that reported above. For 1981, internal records show only 40,334 graduates, or 6,496 less. The 1981 internal figures do not include August, 1981 graduates, who have not been tallied at the Board as yet, so the actual differences are somewhat smaller. The Board has given assurances that the internal reports are accurate. Therefore, the 1982 number of 40,723 has been used and the August graduation proportion for 1981 has been assumed to be the same as that for 1982, yielding a 1981 graduation total of 43,606.

Secondly, the tenth grade in New York City public high schools has recently been larger than the preceeding ninth grade, including ninth graders still enrolled in junior high schools. No clear explanation for this phenomenon has been given by the Board, the State Education Department, or any other source at this time, except that these are predominantly holdovers from the previous grade. Therefore, it was only possible to calculate retention rates by the classical method from grade ten onward using data from all the high schools. Auxiliary high school students (who are all tenth graders studying or the Graduate Equivalency Examination) and special ungraded students whose grade level are indeterminate, are both excluded from this analysis. Estimates for the 9th grade graduation retention will be presented in another section below.

Retention rates from the 10th grade onwards were calculated for two graduation cohorts. The first cohort begins with the tenth grade of 1978-79 and ends with all graduates for 1981. The second cohort begins with the tenth grade of 1980-81 and ends with all graduates for 1982. In Table I, the retention data is presented as the dropout rate for all racial and ethnic groups.

TABLE I

DROPOUT RATES FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE,
TENTH GRADE COHORTS GRADUATING IN 1981 AND 1982

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	DROPOUT RATES 1981 COHORT	1982 COHORT
New York State	28.9%	29.1%
Upstate New York	15.9%	15.3%
New York City	54.0%	55.7%
Bronx County	62.6%	63.7%
Kings County	56.2%	61.9%
New York County	61.2%	60.0%
Queens County	46.2%	44.6%
Richmond County	35.2%	40.6%

For upstate New York, the dropout rates from tenth grade through graduation were 16 and 15 percent for the two successive cohorts. For New York City, the overall dropout rates from tenth grade were 54 percent and 56 percent for the 1981 and 1982 cohorts. For New York County (Manhattan), the dropout rates were 61 percent and 60 percent for these cohorts, respectively.

These figures demonstrate the wide variation in educational opportunity which was available to New York State youth in recent years. It appears that New York City public schools were about half as effective as public high schools in Upstate New York in retaining tenth graders through graduation. While the New York City graduation rate averaged 45 percent, the rate for the rest of the State was 84 percent. Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan high schools were less than half as effective as non-New York City high schools (with graduation rates under 40 percent on average). All New York City counties were significantly less capable of graduating tenth graders than the State as a whole.

MINORITY GROUPS IN GRADE TEN THROUGH GRADUATION

To determine the dropout rate for specific racial and ethnic groups it was necessary to project from enrollment trends to estimate the number of ethnic and racial group diplomas. This is because graduation (as opposed to enrollment) figures have not been included in the school system's ethnic census. This technique related changes in the enrollment of each racial-ethnic group with changes in total enrollment for successive years. Since it was possible to obtain the total number of graduates for each county in New York City and the State as a whole, it was possible, using the trend relationships, to estimate the number of graduates from each racial and ethnic group in each geographic area (but please note that because of their relatively small numbers, the Asian estimate is the least reliable.) The results are presented in Table II below as the estimated dropout rates for selected racial and ethnic groups for both New York City and the balance of the State.

TABLE II

DROPOUT RATES FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS
FOR TENTH GRADE FOR 1978-79 AND 1979-80 THROUGH GRADUATION IN 1981 AND 1982, AVERAGE OF BOTH YEARS

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	DROPOUT RATES				
	HISPANIC	BLACK	WHITE	ASIAN	AVERAGE
New York State	61.9	53.9	18.1	20.2	29.0
Upstate New York	27.0	32.7	14.1	10.2*	15.6
New York City	66.7	61.1	41.0	26.0	54.9
Bronx County	70.2	67.2	39.1	31.8	63.2
Kings County	68.8	64.9	47.5	22.1	59.1
New York County	73.2	58.6	40.3	40.4	60.6

*1981 Only

Table II shows the tremendous difficulty students from all racial and ethnic groups in New York City have in graduating. Hispanics are clearly the most impacted group, followed closely by Blacks.

The differential in dropout rates results in changes in the overall ethnic and racial composition of the public high schools in different grades. The average composition of each grade for the 1981 and 1982 cohorts, averaged, is presented in Table III.

TABLE III

RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF GRADUATION COHORTS OF 1981 AND 1982 (AVERAGED) FOR NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP	GRADE			
	10th	11th	12th	GRADS
Hispanic	25.9%	23.8%	21.17%	19.2%
Black	40.0%	38.2%	36.1%	34.5%
White	30.5%	33.6%	37.2%	39.9%
Asian	3.5%	4.2%	5.5%	5.7%
Total for Grade	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table III shows that Black students are the plurality in the tenth grade but that by the time of graduation, white students are the plurality. In grade ten, there were 4.6 percent more of White than Hispanic students. By the time of graduation, the average difference rose to 20.7 percentage points. Although high school graduation does not guarantee success (given the types of diplomas awarded) the evidence shows that White youngsters in New York City have a tremendous advantage over Hispanic youth in climbing the opportunity ladder.

The NINTH GRADE DROPOUT RATE

We have already mentioned that no official explanation is currently available for the larger size of New York City sophomore classes relative to freshmen classes. One possible explanation, pending further research, is that New York City youth stay in school longer than four years and so are unable to progress normally towards graduation. Thus, the average age of New York City high school students is greater than normal. Table IV presents the breakdown of the change between the two classes for all New York City public school students. The numbers for the sophomore class exclude auxiliary high schools.

TABLE IV

FRESHMAN CLASS OF 1978-79 AND SOPHMORE CLASS OF 1979-80
NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

RACIAL & ETHNIC GROUP	FRESHMEN 1978-79	SOPHOMORES 1979-80	PERCENT CHANGE OVER FRESHMAN CLASS
Total	74,652	91,948	+23.2%
Hispanic	21,652	23,888	+10.9%
Black	34,736	37,259	+ 7.3%
White	17,173	27,173	+58.2%

In order to determine the dropout rate for all four years of high school, it becomes necessary to control for this 10th grade "bottleneck". Calculations for ninth grade dropout rate estimates were, therefore, based on a cohort analysis of all the New York City high schools in the 1982 graduation cohort of 21 public high schools which had larger freshman classes in 1978-79 than sophomore classes in 1979-80. These represented 30 percent of total 9th grade enrollments. Since all twenty-one schools also had fewer juniors in 1980-81, and even fewer seniors in 1981-82, they all fit into the traditional enrollment pattern. The results of this analysis are presented in Table V. It will be noted that the sample's percent of all students falls dramatically between the freshman and sophomore classes.

TABLE V

SAMPLE COHORT ANALYSIS OF 9TH GRADE DROPOUT RATE IN TWENTY-ONE NEW YORK HIGH SCHOOLS, FRESHMAN CLASS OF 1978-79 AND SOPHOMORE CLASS OF 1979-80

RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP	FRESHMAN CLASS STUDENTS	SOPHOMORE CLASS STUDENTS	ESTIMATED NINTH GRADE DROPOUT RATE
Total	22,361	15,414	(31.1%)
Hispanic	9,169	5,975	(34.8%)
Black	10,596	7,064	(32.4%)
White	2,477	2,057	(17.0%)

GRADE BY GRADE DROPOUT RATES

We are now at the point where we can present dropout rates for individual grades from ninth grade through graduation in the New York City public shools, and the estimated overall dropout rates for ninth graders entering school in the last two entrance cohorts of the 1970s.

First, in Table VI we present dropout rates for individual grades. The rates for tenth grade through graduation are from the averaged cohort calculations for all graded students, excluding the auxiliary high schools.

TABLE VI

DROPOUT RATES FOR INDIVIDUAL GRADES IN NEW YORK CITY AND UPSTATE NEW YORK PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, 1978-1982

GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP	DROPOUT RATE			
	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
UPSTATE NEW YORK				
Total	—	8.0	5.6	2.8
Hispanic	—	12.7	11.5	5.6
Black	—	14.5	16.0	6.2
White	—	7.3	5.0	2.5
NEW YORK CITY				
Total	34.1	23.6	31.9	13.3
Hispanic	34.8	30.0	39.7	21.0
Black	32.4	27.2	35.5	17.1
White	17.0	15.5	24.8	7.2

It appears clear from these data that students in all grades in New York City are at a high risk of dropping out. Hispanic and Black students in all grades, and especially in grades nine to eleven, have the highest dropout rates. Also, in contrast to the assumptions of the Board of Education's analyses, there is considerable variation in the dropout rate from grade to grade. On average, for all sixteen different grade/group categories, New York City dropout rates are 3.5 times higher than those for Upstate New York. Hispanic students in New York City drop out at a rate of 3.9 times higher than their Upstate counterparts; Blacks 2.3 times; and Whites 3.8 times higher.

THE OVERALL HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE

The overall dropout rate can be calculated from Table VI above quite simply: 100 percent minus the dropout rate for a given grade gives the retention rate which, subtracted in turn from 100 percent, gives the dropout rate. For example, for total Upstate New York, the retention rate is (.983) (.92) (.944) (.972) = .83, so the dropout rate is 17 percent (100% minus 83%). Table VII presents the dropout rate for upstate New York and New York City:

TABLE VII

FOUR YEAR HIGH SCHOOL OVERALL DROPOUT RATES (GRADE NINE THROUGH GRADUATION) UPSTATE NEW YORK AND NEW YORK CITY, 1978-82

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP	DROPOUT RATE
UPSTATE NEW YORK	Total	17.0%
	Hispanic	29.3
	Black	38.8
	White	15.5
NEW YORK CITY	Total	68.0
	Hispanic	79.7
	Black	72.0
	White	49.8

Table VII shows that the overall New York City dropout rate for graded students of 68 percent is 23 percentage points higher than the previous estimates by the Office of Student Information Services of the New York City Board of Education. The 68 percent total dropout rate for New York City is four times as high as the rate for the rest of New York State.

THE RISING DROPOUT RATE

There are two analytical points to be explored further. First, the direction and rate of change of the dropout rates for New York City high schools and, second, the high school equivalency diploma as an alternative to graduation.

In order to determine the direction and rate of change of the dropout rate for tenth grade through graduation, analysis has been extended to four graduation cohorts (those of 1979 to 1982). Because figures for August graduates were available for 1982 only, the analysis was performed only on January and June diplomas. Therefore, the rates calculated in the analysis do not correspond with the rates shown in Table II. The rates (except for the Projected Total Dropout Rates) are only representative of the dropout situation for January and June graduates. They are presented here only in order to demonstrate the rate of change in the dropout rates. In the straight line projection of the total dropout rate, ninth grade dropouts were assumed constant at 29.1 percent. We find that if the dropout situation continues to develop as it has for the past few cohorts, the total dropout rate will continue to rise by about one percentage point per year as illustrated in Table VIII below.

TABLE VIII

DROPOUT RATES FOR TENTH GRADE JANUARY - JUNE GRADUATION COHORTS OF 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, AND PROJECTIONS FOR 1983 AND 1984, NEW YORK CITY

Racial and Ethnic Group	Year 1979	1980	1981	1982	1983 (proj.)	1984 (proj.)
10th-12th Grades	55.7	56.5	57.5	59.0	-	-
9th-12th Grades	N/A	N/A	67.4	68.6	69.2	69.9

THE HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION

We have already seen that most "holding power" programs appear to be relatively unsuccessful in graduating students. The youngster who is in danger of dropping out, then, has one of two alternatives: to "main stream" (i.e., return to normal grade to grade progression) or acquire a Graduate Equivalency Diploma while still enrolled or after dropping out.

Several conversations held with informed persons at the Board of Education indicate that mainstreaming is not occuring at a significant level, making the GED an important alternative to explore. Presently, several programs are partially aimed towards preparing students for the Graduate Equivalency Examination. The 1980-81 Holding Power Report lists Project Outreach, Samuel Gompers, Morris, Theodore Roosevelt, Midwood, South Shore, George Wingate, George Washington, John Adams, John Browne, Flushing, Jamaica and Middle College high schools as having some form of Graduate Equivalency Diploma program. The Board, apparently, does not collect statistics on the numbers of public school students who earn equivalency diplomas, making it difficult to evaluate the success of these programs.

Two sources of information do indicate, though, that the Graduate Equivalency Diploma is not the answer for most dropouts. About 190,000 Equivalency Diplomas have been granted since 1975 in New York City, but over 350,000 persons have taken the test during this period, making the failure rate about 46 percent. Although the age distribution of persons failing and passing the Equivalency Examination could be determined by further research, no such investigation has been undertaken as yet.

Information from auxiliary high schools, which prepare dropouts and potential dropouts for the High School Equivalency Examination, is likewise discouraging. Table IX presents data for the number of persons served by the auxiliary high school centers and the number of persons from

that group sitting for the examination and the number passing. Since there is little variation from year to year, only a grand total is presented. Ethnic breakdowns for students under the age of 21 and for the number passing the examination are not currently available.

TABLE IX

AUXILIARY HIGH SCHOOLS, GRAND TOTAL OF STUDENTS TAKING AND PASSING GRADUATE EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82.

	Total	Racial or Ethnic Group Hispanic	Black	White & Asian
Enrolled	39,928	10,639	19,944	9,345
Under Age 21	31,403	(78.6% of total)		
Sitting	9,693	2,705	4,206	2,782
Percent Sitting	(24.3%)	(24.4%)	(21.1%)	(29.8%)
Passing	7,842	(80.9% of total GED exam takers; 19.6% of total enrolled to take GED)		

The data reveal that the percent of enrollees who even get to the point of taking the test is low for all racial or ethnic groups. The conclusion to be drawn from the auxiliary high school experience is clear: the Graduate Equivalency Examination is currently a questionable alternative to the regular high school diploma and a questionable solution to the dropout problem.

DROPOUT OUTLOOK

In addition to the dropout problem it appears that those students who do graduate from New York City high schools receive a substandard education. About six out of every ten diplomas granted in Upstate high schools during 1982 were either Regents endorsed or Regent honors while, in comparison, less than one-third of New York City's diplomas were.

If public high school enrollment patterns continue as they have in the past, 200,000 current ten to twelve year olds will be relying on public education for their high school experience. These students (at a rate of about 66,667 per year) will begin to join the swollen ranks of the upper grades during the Fall of 1985. Of the entering 66,667, only 21,333 will graduate and 45,333 will drop out, given the current dropout rate. Cumulatively, 136,000 of today's ten to twelve year olds may find themselves on the street without a high school diploma by 1991.

Indeed, if the rising dropout trend of the past four years continues, and the youngsters are in the graduation cohorts of 1989, 1990 and 1991, about 74.2 percent, 75.0 percent, and 75.8 percent of these students, respectively, will drop out, this would result in only 50,000 graduates and 130,000 dropouts.

CONCLUSION

In view of the tremendous deficiency of public secondary education in New York City revealed by this study, it is obvious that significant improvements will be necessary. Bringing the high schools of New York City at least up to the standards of Upstate New York high schools will not be an easy task. Yet, it is a task which is absolutely necessary and cannot be delayed.

EPILOGUE AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS: ASPIRA OF NEW YORK'S POSITION

With the June 9, 1983 release of the report commissioned by ASPIRA of New New York on the situation of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics in the New York City public high schools, Minority Secondary Education in New York State and New York City, the agency sought to stimulate public concern and discussion on an educational issue important to our community and the City as a whole. This report revealed:

-- An unacceptable dropout rate among Hispanic and Black youngsters from public high schools, with non-Hispanic Whites not being far behind.

-- Compared to the rest of New York State, the performance of the New York City public high schools has been poor in a number of areas. For example:

- The overall dropout rate in New York City is four times that of the rest of the State.

- The percent of graduates receiving the college-oriented Regents-endorsed high school diplomas in New York City is half that for the rest of the State.

-- The failure rate of students taking the Regents Competency Examinations, particularly in mathematics, is alarmingly high.

-- The almost doubling in the last six years of the number of students in the "Special Ungraded" category, i.e., in special dropout prevention programs and alternative schools not taking courses for credit, is extremely troubling, since about 80 percent of them can be expected to drop out eventually.

-- The low percentage of Puerto Rican and Hispanic teachers and administrators, despite the continued growth of the proportion of the student body that is Hispanic, remains a major problem.

-- The strong relationship between high school completion and gainful employment indicates the direct relevance of the high dropout problem to the economic development of both the Puerto Rican-Hispanic community and New York City as a whole.

The ASPIRA-commissioned report raised questions about the Board of Education's research into the dropout problem. Utilizing available but admittedly more limited data than that utilized by Board, this report indicated that the overall dropout rate could be as high as 68 percent in contrast to the official dropout rate of 45 percent. This is a conclusion the Board of Education has challenged on technical grounds and which we are closely and seriously reviewing.

Following our meeting with the Chancellor on July 26, 1983, and spurred by the need for further review of this problem, ASPIRA has found a number of additional serious flaws in the Board's dropout figure that buttress our stand on this matter, based on further research by Ronald Calitri. These include the following:

- Comparing Census data with the Board's graduation figures for 1982-83 (43,413), we found that there are a minimum of 51,716 seventeen year olds in the public high schools that did not graduate, yielding a very conservative dropout rate of 54 percent, or close to ten percent points higher than the official 45 percent dropout rate. Without all of the restrictive assumptions made by Calitri, the dropout rate could be as high as 65 percent using these census data.

- We have a concern that the base upon which the Board calculates its dropout rate, total graded registers, represents a serious undercount of students. For example:

  - In their March, 1983 dropout report, the Board cites the the problem of individual school underreporting of dropouts and the absence of an effective auditing system to prevent this from occuring. Chancellor Alvarado's initiative of threatening to close down or restructure schools with an excessive dropout problem will, no doubt, exacerbate this under-reporting problem.

  - The accuracy of the Office of Student Information Services (O.S.I.S.) biofile is open to question. The Office of Population of the City Planning Commission, which issues transportation passes, reports that 26 percent of the address in the biofile records submitted to them were incorrect.

  - According to the Board's Attendance Bureau, in 1979-80 about 35,000 student records were simply "purged" from the registers as "no shows", following Circular No. 2.

The Board's contention that the calculation methods used by ASPIRA are incorrect has not been a helpful posture. As we have openly admitted, the findings in our report are no more than estimates and are not based on all the required data, which the Board possesses in one form or another. However, we find that our estimates, unavailable data notwithstanding, appear to be closer to the realities of the dropout problem than the Board's official figure.

We believe, in part, that the methods used in our report are justified given the information available. We also believe that the assumptions the Board is forced to make to yield the 45 percent figure are questionable. For example, in the "attrition" method used by the Board in the March report, the assumption that the "holdovers" do not have to be accounted for because of a "replacement factor" is based on a static

holdover situation in the system when this is, in fact, not the case. As O.S.I.S. has admitted, the holdover problem cannot be addressed because 9th and 10th grade registers "cannot be used in dropout calculations because they cannot, at this time, be corrected for holdover rates." (July 20th memo, page 3) It is our contention that there has been great variation in holdover rates over time and that this needs to be incorporated into the dropout calculations. Our report attempts to do so. The need it points to is for a method or methods that account for variations in the following factors without assuming that they all cancel themselves out automatically: private school transfers, new entrants, holdovers, promotions to successive grades, migration, and the proportion of ninth graders who eventually graduate, among others.

The report raised the need for a more detailed understanding of the dynamics of the dropout problem, which includes the urgency of moving beyond the calculation of a single high school dropout rate for the system as a whole or for individual schools. We would like to see the Board of Education go beyond the minimum statutory requirements in their research by, for example:

- Developing methods to estimate the dropout rate by race and ethnicity.

- Providing a better accounting of the fate of those thousands of students that are "holdovers".

- Calculating the dropout rate on a grade by grade basis.

- Initiating a programmatic broadening of the definition of "dropouts" to include an examination of those young people 17 years and younger.

From ASPIRA of New York's discussions with officials of the Board of Education subsequent to our report, we have concluded that:

— There is an urgent need for a <u>new relationship</u> to be established between the Office of the Schools Chancellor and the Puerto Rican-Hispanic community through:

  - Regular (possible bi-monthly) meetings that would be held between the Chancellor and representatives from a cross-section of the Puerto Rican-Hispanic educational and parent organizations to discuss and act on developments in the schools in a timely, consistent and more cooperative manner than in the past.

  - A report by the Chancellor on his plans to more fully implement much-needed bilingual-bilcultural education programs in the New York City public schools beginning, we would suggest, with a written analysis of the state of these programs today.

-- There is a longterm need to cooperatively and constructively review and be informed of the Board's overall research program from the point of view of Puerto Rican and other community perspectives and to increase public support for such activity. In this regard we recommend that:

- A committee composed of a cross-section of educational organizations from various communities be convened to meet with Board's research staff to jointly develop an agenda.

- Such a joint Board-Community committee should issue a report within six months of its convening on its findings and recommenddations.

Integrating sectors that in the past have been excluded from major decision making can be the beginning of a new relationship that builds on community-based experiences and resources. Discussions with officials and staff of the Board of Education on the desireability of deepening this relationship have been extremely encouraging to date. Clearly, our common concern is the development of the full potential of every single young person in the City of New York. ASPIRA of New York stands ready to contribute its share towards fulfilling this goal —— it is the very purpose of our existence as a community-based educational institution.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Board of Education, City of New York: "High School Dropout Statistics, 1981-82"; March, 1983

Board of Education, city of New York: "Public High School Dropout Data"; 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82

Board of Education, City of New York: "Summary Report on Holding Power Efforts, 1980-81"; June 29, 1981

Board of Education, City of New York: "Ethnic Census, of Public School Students by School District and New York State"; 1969-70, 1970-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82

Board of Education, City of New York; Division of High Schools: "Comparative Analysis, Organization of the High Schools" Fall Terms 1977, 78 and 79, School Year 1980-81, Fall Term 1981

_____ ;_____: "Distribution of High School Graduates and College-Going Rate"; Fall 1981, Fall 1982, Spring 1983

_____ ;_____: "Report on Graduates, June 1982 - Operational Memorandum"

New York State Education Department: High School Equivalency Program, Records of High School Equivalency Examinations; 1982

_____ :_____: "Ethnic Census, Nonpublic Schools, by Affiliation, County, State"; 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82

United States Department of Commerce: 1980 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3; Printout for New York State Department of Commerce, State Data Center; 1983

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

CHAIRPERSON
GLADYS CARRION, ESQ.
BRONX, NEW YORK

VICE CHAIRPERSONS
PHILIP RIVERA
EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY

FRANCES CORREA
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES

TREASURER
JAMES SOLIVAN
N.Y.C. OFF-TRACK BETTING CORP.

SECRETARY
JOSE SERPA
LA FAMILIA REPERTORY COMPANY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ANGELO GONZALEZ

Members

BLANCA CEDENO
N.Y.C. HOUSING AUTHORITY

SANDRA PALLEJA, M.D.
MONTIFIORE HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CTR.

WILFREDO CHABRIER
CHILDREN'S T.V. WORKSHOP

RAYMOND PLUMEY
BEYER BLINDER BELLE ARCHTECTS & PLANNERS

JOHNNY COLON
EAST HARLEM MUSIC SCHOOL

NATHAN QUINONES
N.Y.C. BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINERVA DELGADO
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

JOHN J. RIOS
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

ANGELO FALCON
INSTITUTE FOR PUERTO RICAN POLICY

ANA VIVES
SPECIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

NANCY FERRER
WELLESLEY COLLEGE

WILLIAM RADINSON
PORT AUTHORITY OF N.Y. & N.J.

FR. ROBERTO GONZALEZ
HOLY CROSS CHURCH

Student Members

KALI BROWN
S.U.N.Y. AT STONY BROOK

MIGUEL REY
HUNTER COLLEGE

Honorary Members

ROBERT E. MEZA, ESQ.
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

LUZ MARIA FONOLLOSA
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

MARIO ABREU
DISTRICT 65 U.A.W.

MIGUEL MARTINEZ
N.Y.C. BOARD OF EDUCATION

DR. ROSA ESTADES
NEW YORK, NEW YORK